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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

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~ Twitter-sharing Problem ~ FCC Chief Steps Down! ~ Digital Wallet Fees!

- * Pheed Winning Over The Teens *-
- * Warning: Fake Homeland Security Mail *-
- * E-mail Snooping Law No Longer Makes Sense! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

It's been another long week; and I've been very busy dealing with various family issues that have been going on for over a year now. It's frustrating, to say the least. So, let's just move forward and get to this week's issue!

Until next time...

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - New Leak Suggests Next-gen Xbox Won't Play Used Games!
"~~~~~" EA CEO John Riccitiello Steps Down!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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New Leak Suggests Next-gen Xbox Won't Play Used Games

Following a number of reports claiming Microsoft's next-generation video game console, codenamed Durango, will block users' ability to play preowned games, a new report appears to back up those claims. In a series of purported screenshots from Microsoft's Durango SDK published by VgLeaks.com, several earlier rumors regarding Microsoft's next console appear to have been confirmed. Among them is the claim that game play from a disk will not be supported, and users will instead have to install games to the device's hard drive in order to play.

Previous rumors suggested Microsoft plans to require that users install games on their hard drives and enter a unique activation code in order to

play. The console will then require an always-on Internet connection and will ping a server to verify the activation code.

It should be noted that early rumors suggested a similar authentication system would block used games on Sony's PlayStation 4, however the rumors were debunked when the device was unveiled last month.

The leaked Durango SDK screenshots also mention a new high-fidelity Kinect Sensor that will be sold with every console, and that must be connected in order for the system to operate. The most telling of the leaked images follows below.

EA CEO John Riccitiello Steps Down

Electronic Arts' John Riccitiello is stepping down as chief executive officer. He submitted his resignation to EA's board of directors today, and will finish his tenure March 30. Effective immediately, former EA president and CEO Larry Probst will step in as executive chairman while the company searches for a replacement.

"We appreciate John's leadership and the many important strategic initiatives he has driven for the Company," Probst said. "We have mutually agreed that this is the right time for a leadership transition."

Riccitiello addressed his departure directly in a blog. "My decision to leave EA is really all about my accountability for the shortcomings in our financial results this year," he said. "It currently looks like we will come in at the low end of, or slightly below, the financial guidance we issued to the Street, and we have fallen short of the internal operating plan we set one year ago. And for that, I am 100 percent accountable."

EA's earnings have been on the decline, and the company recently faced numerous layoffs as well.

In a press release statement, Riccitiello said, "EA is an outstanding company with creative and talented employees, and it has been an honor to serve as the Company's CEO. I am proud of what we have accomplished together, and after six years I feel it is the right time for me pass the baton and let new leadership take the Company into its next phase of innovation and growth. I remain very optimistic about EA's future there is a world class team driving the Company's transition to the next generation of game consoles."

When IGN inquired for additional context from EA, a representative stated, "We're not going to comment beyond the publicly released material."

Riccitiello served as CEO since 2007.

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Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Justice: Email Snooping Law No Longer Makes Sense

The Justice Department on Tuesday dropped its support for a controversial provision in a federal law that allows police to review some private emails without a warrant, but it asked Congress to expand its surveillance powers in other ways.

The testimony by a top Obama administration lawyer before a House subcommittee was met with cautious optimism by privacy advocates and civil liberties groups who have worked for years to overturn parts of the 1986 Electronic Communications Privacy Act. They said it provides a starting point for a compromise in a debate that has endured for more than a decade.

"What's very positive to me is the amount of common ground that's suddenly arisen," said Chris Calabrese, legislative counsel with the American Civil Liberties Union, one of several organizations looking to change the law. "If we have an agreement on this (provision), we should move forward."

The 1986 law was written before the Internet was popularized and before many Americans used Yahoo or Google servers to store their emails indefinitely. The law allows federal authorities to obtain a subpoena approved by a federal prosecutor not a judge to access electronic messages older than 180 days. Privacy groups have sought since 2000 to amend the law but failed after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks shifted the debate over the government's ability to intercept communications.

With Americans increasingly relying on email and the proliferation of "cloud computing" to store messages on servers outside a person's home the debate has shifted back toward privacy protections. Meanwhile, technology companies including Google, Twitter and Dropbox have said they are overwhelmed with requests by law enforcement for email records. Google says government demands for emails and other information held on its servers increased 136 percent since 2009.

On Tuesday, the acting assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Policy, Elana Tyrangiel, told a House Judiciary subcommittee that there is no principled basis to treat email less than 180 days old differently than email more than 180 days old. She also said emails deserve the same legal protections whether they have been opened or not.

Her comments were in contrast to previous testimony by Justice Department officials, asking Congress not to do anything that would disrupt law enforcement's ability to investigate violent crimes and child pornography.

Tyrangiel said, however, that Congress should carve out an exemption for civil investigators, such as federal regulators looking into alleged antitrust or environmental violations. Those investigators should only require a subpoena to review emails, she said, because their work doesn't involve criminal charges.

Tyrangiel also said that Congress should consider making it easier for law enforcement to see who is emailing or otherwise sending online messages to whom. She said existing law requires law enforcement to obtain a warrant or court order to access that information for emails, whereas only a

subpoena is needed to obtain telephone records.

"While law enforcement can obtain records of calls made to and from a particular phone using a subpoena, the same officer can only obtain 'to' and 'from' addressing information associated with email using a court order or a warrant, both of which are only available in criminal investigations," she said.

The law has been invaluable for investigators in child pornography cases and to develop probable cause to obtain warrants against suspected criminals, said Richard Littlehale, head of a high-tech investigative unit with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. He said the privacy problem has been overstated and that the law should be changed to compel service providers to retain every text message and email in case law enforcement needs access to it later.

"The truth is that no one has put forward any evidence of pervasive law enforcement abuse of ECPA provisions," Littlehale told the House panel.

Greg Nojeim, senior counsel at the Center for Democracy and Technology, said these proposals "run in the opposite direction" of where Congress is headed and are unlikely to gain traction. Allowing warrantless review of email logs in particular, he said, "removes a judicial check on a very intrusive surveillance power. Records about who you communicate with can almost be more revealing than the content of your communications."

Hanni Fakhoury, a staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, agreed and said he thinks the Justice Department changed its position on warrantless email snooping because it had little choice.

"I feel like they were the last people in the world to come to the conclusion," he said. "DOJ has very little to lose coming around to saying, 'OK, we're going to require a search warrant.'"

The Justice Department declined to comment.

U.S. Computer Hacker Gets Three-and-a-half Years for Stealing iPad User Data

A computer hacker was sentenced on Monday to three years and five months in prison for stealing the personal data of about 120,000 Apple Inc iPad users, including big-city mayors, a TV network news anchor and a Hollywood movie mogul.

Andrew Auernheimer, 27, had been convicted in November by a Newark, New Jersey, jury of one count of conspiracy to access AT&T Inc servers without permission, and one count of identity theft.

The sentence imposed by U.S. District Judge Susan Wigenton in Newark was at the high end of the 33- to 41-month range that the U.S. Department of Justice had sought.

Prosecutors had said prison time would help deter hackers from invading the privacy of innocent people on the Internet.

Among those affected by Auernheimer's activities were ABC News anchor Diane Sawyer, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Hollywood movie producer Harvey Weinstein, prosecutors said.

"When it became clear that he was in trouble, he concocted the fiction that he was trying to make the Internet more secure, and that all he did was walk in through an unlocked door," U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman said in a statement. "The jury didn't buy it, and neither did the court in imposing sentence."

Auernheimer had sought probation. His lawyer had argued that no passwords were hacked, and that a long prison term was unjustified given that the government recently sought six months for a defendant in a case involving "far more intrusive facts."

The lawyer, Tor Ekeland, said his client would appeal. He said the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act doesn't clearly define what constitutes unauthorized access.

"If this is criminal, then tens of thousands of Americans are committing computer crimes every other day," Ekeland said in an interview. "There really was no harm."

Auernheimer was handcuffed at one point during the sentencing, the lawyer said. He said his client may have been "tweeting" on his phone, and the U.S. marshals took it away.

Ekeland is also a lawyer for Matthew Keys, a deputy social media editor at Thomson Reuters Corp who was suspended with pay on Friday.

Keys was indicted last week in California on federal charges of aiding the Anonymous hacking collective by giving a hacker access to Tribune Co computer systems in December 2010.

The alleged events occurred before Keys began working at the website Reuters.com. Ekeland on Friday said Keys "maintains his innocence" and "looks forward to contesting these baseless charges."

Prosecutors called Auernheimer a "well-known computer hacker and internet 'troll,'" who with co-defendant Daniel Spitler and the group Goatse Security tried to disrupt online content and services.

The two men were accused of using an "account slurper" designed to match email addresses with identifiers for iPad users, and of conducting a "brute force" attack to extract data about those users, who accessed the Internet through the AT&T servers.

This stolen information was then provided to the website Gawker, which published an article naming well-known people whose emails had been compromised, prosecutors said.

Spitler pleaded guilty in June 2011 to the same charges for which Auernheimer was convicted, and is awaiting sentencing.

Gawker was not charged in the case. In its original article, Gawker said Goatse obtained its data through a script on AT&T's website that was accessible to anyone on the Internet. Gawker also said in the article that it established the authenticity of the data through two people listed among the names. A Gawker spokesman on Monday declined to elaborate.

AT&T has partnered with Apple in the United States to provide wireless service on the iPad. After the hacking, it shut off the feature that

allowed email addresses to be obtained.

The case is U.S. v. Auernheimer, U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, No. 11-00470.

Cyberwar Manual Lays Down Rules for Online Attacks

Even cyberwar has rules, and one group of experts is putting out a manual to prove it.

Their handbook, due to be published later this week, applies the practice of international law to the world of electronic warfare in an effort to show how hospitals, civilians and neutral nations can be protected in an information-age fight.

"Everyone was seeing the Internet as the 'Wild, Wild West,'" U.S. Naval War College Professor Michael Schmitt, the manual's editor, said in an interview before its official release. "What they had forgotten is that international law applies to cyberweapons like it applies to any other weapons."

The Tallinn Manual named for the Estonian capital where it was compiled was created at the behest of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence, a NATO think tank. It takes existing rules on battlefield behavior, such as the 1868 St. Petersburg Declaration and the 1949 Geneva Convention, to the Internet, occasionally in unexpected ways.

Marco Roscini, who teaches international law at London's University of Westminster, described the manual as a first-of-its-kind attempt to show that the laws of war some of which date back to the 19th century were flexible enough to accommodate the new realities of online conflict.

The 282-page handbook has no official standing, but Roscini predicted that it would be an important reference as military lawyers across the world increasingly grapple with what to do about electronic attacks.

"I'm sure it will be quite influential," he said.

The manual's central premise is that war doesn't stop being war just because it happens online. Hacking a dam's controls to release its reservoir into a river valley can have the same effect as breaching it with explosives, its authors argue.

Legally speaking, a cyberattack that sparks a fire at a military base is indistinguishable from an attack that uses an incendiary shell.

The humanitarian protections don't disappear online either. Medical computers get the same protection that brick-and-mortar hospitals do. The personal data related to prisoners of war has to be kept safe in the same way that the prisoners themselves are for example by having the information stored separately from military servers that might be subject to attack.

Cyberwar can lead to cyberwar crimes, the manual warned. Launching an attack from a neutral nation's computer network is forbidden in much the same way that hostile armies aren't allowed to march through a neutral country's territory. Shutting down the Internet in an occupied area in

retaliation for a rebel cyberattack could fall afoul of international prohibitions on collective punishment.

The experts behind the manual two dozen officers, academics, and researchers drawn mainly from NATO states didn't always agree on how traditional rules applied in a cyberwar.

Self-defense was a thorny issue. International law generally allows nations to strike first if they spot enemy soldiers about to pour across the border, but how could that be applied to a world in which attacks can happen at the click of a mouse?

Other aspects of international law seemed obsolete or at least in need of an upgrade in the electronic context.

Soldiers are generally supposed to wear uniforms and carry their arms openly, for example, but what relevance could such a requirement have when they are hacking into distant targets from air-conditioned office buildings?

The law also forbids attacks on "civilian objects," but the authors were divided as to whether the word "object" could be interpreted to mean "data." So that may leave a legal loophole for a military attack that erases valuable civilian data, such as a nation's voter registration records.

U.S. Warns of Fake Emails Claiming To Be from Homeland Security

The U.S. government on Thursday warned computer users to beware of fake emails they may receive from hackers claiming to be from the Department of Homeland Security and demanding money to reinstate use of their computer.

Homeland Security's U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, or US-CERT, published an alert on its website warning it had received reports of DHS-themed "ransomware."

"Users who are being targeted by the ransomware receive an email message claiming that use of their computer has been suspended and that the user must pay a fine to unblock it," the warning said, adding that the ransomware falsely claims to be from the department and its National Cyber Security Division.

Ransomware is increasingly widespread malicious software that purports to encrypt a user's files and then demands payment to unlock them.

US-CERT urged users and systems administrations to use caution if they find a questionable email message that could contain the ransomware. It said to urge users not to click on the messages or submit any information to Web pages.

Indiana School, Girls, Settle Facebook Threat Lawsuit

Three Indiana girls who discussed killing classmates in Facebook posts adorned with smiley faces and LOLs have reached a settlement with the

school district that expelled them.

American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana attorney Gavin Rose said Tuesday the settlement was confidential and he could not discuss the details. He did say the girls have returned to Griffith Public Schools for their freshman year of high school after being expelled for the second half of their eighth grade year.

The attorney who represented the school district did not immediately return a phone call Tuesday seeking comment.

Documents show the lawsuit filed in federal court in Hammond was dismissed Monday.

School officials said the girls' posts showed a threat, while the ACLU said the comments were jokes made off-campus.

Florida Court: Threats Posted on Facebook Are Crimes

In an apparent first in Florida law, a state appeals court ruled Monday that posting threats on one's personal Facebook page can be prosecuted under state law.

The 1st District Court of Appeal decided in a criminal case that a Facebook post could be considered a "sending" for the purposes of the "sending written threats to kill or do bodily harm" law, a second-degree felony.

The language at issue was in a status that the defendant, Timothy Ryan O'Leary, had posted on his Facebook page in 2011 about a female relative and her same-sex partner. The relative didn't see it but found out about it through another family member.

O'Leary said, in part, that he would "tear the concrete up with your face and drag you back to your doorstep." He added, "(You) better watch how ... you talk to people. You were born a woman and you better stay one."

O'Leary argued he couldn't be charged because he did not "send" the threatening language to his relative. A Duval County circuit judge denied his request to dismiss the charges.

After the state dropped one of two counts, O'Leary pleaded no contest to the remaining count. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison, followed by five years of probation. The probation requirement was later reduced to two years.

O'Leary appealed, and a unanimous three-judge panel sided with the trial judge.

The panel's opinion noted that O'Leary's case passed the legal test of showing a violation of the law:

A person "writes or composes a threat to kill or do bodily injury,"

The person "sends or (arranges for) the sending of that communication to another person," and

The "threat is to the recipient of the communication, or a member of his family."

"Given the mission of Facebook, there is no logical reason to post comments other than to communicate them to other Facebook users," the opinion said.

If O'Leary wanted "to put his thoughts into writing for his own personal contemplation, he could simply have recorded them in a private journal, diary, or any other medium that is not accessible by other people," it added.

"Thus, by the affirmative act of posting the threats on Facebook, even though it was on his own personal page, appellant 'sent' the threatening statements to all of his Facebook friends," including the family member of the victim who saw the threat.

That person told yet another relative, and that relative informed the victim.

The case is O'Leary v. State of Florida, 1D12-0975.

Judge: Lawyer Can't Withdraw from NY Facebook Suit

A lawyer who wanted off the case of a New York man suing for an interest in Facebook has been denied his request to withdraw.

Ohio attorney Dean Boland asked to be removed as Paul Ceglia's (SEHG-lee-uh's) attorney in the fall. He said his reasons were private, but it was revealed during a court hearing that he had received threats and was concerned for his safety.

Ceglia, of Wellsville, at first objected to losing his lead attorney but later agreed to it.

Nevertheless, a federal judge in Buffalo said no, writing Wednesday that Boland's reasons for withdrawing were insufficient and his departure could delay the case.

Ceglia's 2010 lawsuit seeks half-ownership of Facebook based on a 2003 contract he signed with founder Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook says the contract was doctored.

Visa CEO Calls Digital Wallet Fee on PayPal "Appropriate"

Visa Inc Chief Executive Charlie Scharf suggested on Wednesday that the payment network may impose a fee on digital wallet operators like PayPal, following rival MasterCard Inc.

MasterCard said earlier this year that it plans a new fee for digital wallet operators starting in June.

PayPal is not an official payment network in its own right. Instead, when people use PayPal to pay for something, the purchases are funded from

their bank account or their credit and debit cards. Because of this, PayPal already pays huge amounts of fees to Visa, MasterCard and American Express whenever a PayPal purchase is funded with a credit card bearing those logos.

Shares of eBay Inc, owner of PayPal, the largest digital wallet operator, have been hit hard on concerns other payment networks may roll out similar fees, cutting into PayPal's profitability.

"I think it is totally appropriate to do that," Scharf said during the Barclays Emerging Payments Forum on Wednesday, when asked if Visa was planning a digital wallet fee.

Digital wallets are electronic versions of real wallets that store card and bank information and can be used to buy things online quickly and anonymously. These digital wallets are increasingly moving into the physical world, through consumers' use of smartphones while shopping in retail stores.

PayPal is moving from its online roots into the physical retailer world, where the vast majority of payments still take place. It is a big opportunity for the business, and that has driven eBay shares higher in the past year.

However, as a payment option in lots of physical stores, PayPal will be a bigger threat to networks like MasterCard, Visa and American Express, analysts say.

"Some of the people we compete with started out as one thing and they morph into another thing, and doing things online is very different than doing things at point of sale," Scharf said on Wednesday.

"We are always thinking about those relationships and they have changed," he added. "And if they changed enough that we think it warrants us to change something with us, we will do that."

A Visa spokesman declined to comment on Wednesday.

The MasterCard fee will be charged on "staged" digital wallets, such as PayPal, Google's Wallet, Square, iZettle in Europe and Intuit Inc's GoPayment, according to analysts.

Staged digital wallets typically share less information with card issuers and the networks, creating customer service problems and making it more difficult to deal with card rewards programs, analysts say.

"Allowing data to be passed through to our issuers and then not allowing data to be passed through to our issuers makes us re-think about our pricing and our rules," Scharf said on Wednesday.

Gil Luria, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, said it is "inevitable" that Visa will follow MasterCard's move and introduce a digital wallet fee of its own.

"This is a fully functioning duopoly. When one does something, the other one follows suit," Luria explained. "It was MasterCard's turn to exercise its market power. If they are allowed to do it then Visa will follow."

Google's Chrome, Android Systems To Stay Separate

Google Inc's Chrome and Android operating systems will remain separate products but could have more overlap, Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt said, a week after the two came under a single boss.

Google last week said Andy Rubin, the architect of Android - the world's top-selling mobile operating system - was moving to a still-undefined role while Sundar Pichai, in charge of its Chrome web browser and applications like Google Drive and Gmail, was taking on Rubin's responsibilities.

Schmidt, Google's chief executive from 2001 to 2011, is becoming more outspoken on issues involving technology and world affairs, and was in India as part of a multi-country Asian tour to promote Internet access.

After New Delhi, he is visiting Myanmar, which is seen as the last virgin territory for businesses in Asia.

In January he went to North Korea, saying it was a personal trip to talk about a free and open Internet.

Only about a tenth of India's more than 1.2 billion people have access to the Internet, although that is changing fast with growth in low-cost tablet computers and cheaper smartphones.

Schmidt called on India to clarify a law that holds so-called intermediaries like Google and Facebook liable for content users post on the web.

In 2011, India passed a law that obliges social media companies to remove a range of objectionable content when requested to do so, a move criticised at the time by human rights groups and companies.

Schmidt also said rumours he may be leaving Google were "completely false." He was responding to a question on whether his plan to sell about 42 percent of his Google stake was a signal that he was leaving the world's No.1 search engine.

"Google is my home," he said, adding that he had no plans to take on a job in government.

Pheed: The Social Network That's Winning Over Teens from Facebook and Twitter

As Facebook slowly rolls out its updated News Feed design, featuring content-sorted feeds dedicated to photos and music, a popular social networking alternative has emerged. Pheed, a small start-up out of Los Angeles, is not only capitalizing on dedicated photo and audio streams, but it also offers feeds for text, video and live broadcasts, not to mention an in-your-face homepage tattooed hands interlaced behind a young man's head boldly announce this is not your grandma's social network.

In February, Pheed became the No. 1 free social networking app in Apple's App Store, ruling the charts ahead of competitors like Twitter and Facebook for more than a week. The audience driving Pheed's spike in downloads? Young adults in their late teens, a demographic often said to

be losing interest in Facebook. Eighty-four percent of Pheed's users are ranking in at between the ages of 15 and 24.

Pheed's self-funded website and iOS app launched in late 2012, claiming a few notable celebrities as early adopters. ABCNews.com spoke to Pheed's team CEO (and seed-round funder of \$2.5 million) O.D. Kobo, who chalked up the involvement of stars like Miley Cyrus, The Game and Nas to a few lucky meetings with music industry managers who were interested in supporting a "little underdog trying to give it a shot against the big giants" of social media. Kobo said that celebrity participants were not paid to promote the service.

Part of the celebrity draw has been Pheed's copyright system, which allows content creators to watermark the photos and videos they share on the social network. Watermarks create a line of gray text with the username on the photo itself. If someone were to download the photo, the text would remain. Pheed also offers copyright disclaimers around audio and text updates and allows users to set prices for access to content and live-streams on Pheed pages. The copyright feature serves as a declaration or 'stamp' of ownership from the content creator, Pheed says.

In December 2012, Pheed's copyright features attracted a number of photographers to the service. As Pheed's initial audience grew, the network's founders decided to enact a 30-day "lock down" on registration and app downloads. The service was unavailable through all of January and on Feb. 1, pent-up demand for the app was released. Without any advertising and completely through word-of-mouth, Pheed grew by 450%. The company, however, will not release exact download numbers.

Kobo credits timing, product and community for the network's early success, as well as Pheed's image as the "bad boy of social media," a vibe that emerged from the network's "modern, contemporary" look, which includes the photo of a man covered in tattoos that users see when logging in. The type of content you'll see posted to Pheed is similar in nature to Tumblr, with artsy photography and quotes being "heart-ed" and "remixed" ("liked" and "shared") more often than personal photos.

Pheed is still in need of some critical updates to compete directly with Facebook, but Kobo says the updates are coming fast, with plans to release photo, video and even audio filters over the next few weeks. Those are all a part of the effort to compete with and surpass the content modification tools of Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Pheed's upcoming audio filters may serve to filter out background noise or even add light jazz to the background of voice recordings.

Updates are also on the way this month to offer link previews, improve user interface for searches (searching content will be made available) and add privacy settings for posts (current posts are by default public and searchable by Google). Pheed is also in the final stages of development for their Android app.

While live-streaming video, filtered photos and text updates are all currently split into a number of popular apps and services, Kobo's goal is to have one app that rolls together all types of social media content. While that could become confusing, his plan is to slowly introduce more and more ways for Pheeders to express themselves and let the existing audience educate new users on the tool's intricacies rather than strip the app of features.

Pheed is based out of a Los Angeles mansion turned office. When it comes

to competing with Facebook and Twitter, Kobo admits, "I've never been to Silicon Valley in my life." Yet another thing setting Pheed apart from all those other social networking feeds.

Windows Embedded 8 Generally Available

Microsoft Corp. today announced via its website the general availability of the Windows Embedded 8 family of operating systems. Extending Windows 8 technologies to a spectrum of edge devices, Windows Embedded 8 helps enterprises capitalize on the Internet of Things with the platform to capture, analyze and act on valuable data across IT infrastructures.

Edge devices connected and working in unison with an enterprise's broader IT infrastructure unleash the potential of the Internet of Things by yielding the actionable data and operational intelligence that drive businesses forward, said Kevin Dallas, general manager of Windows Embedded at Microsoft. From the rich, familiar experience of Windows to integrated management, analytics and cloud platforms, Windows Embedded 8 coupled with the full breadth of Microsoft technologies for intelligent systems helps enterprises gain lasting competitive advantages in retail, manufacturing, healthcare and a variety of industries.

Devices at the edge of enterprise networks connected to integrated Microsoft software and services help enterprises identify and act on opportunities that otherwise would be out of reach by improving access to data, enhancing performance, extending security and powering flexible line-of-business applications. With Windows Embedded 8, enterprises can harness Windows 8 technologies with additional features to support industry devices within intelligent systems including rich, natural experiences that provide customers and employees with access to the information they are looking for while ensuring the consistency and predictability businesses require. Businesses will also have the ability to add or buy enterprise-specific functionality for their Windows Embedded 8-based solutions through licensing options Microsoft will make available in July.

For original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and developers, Windows Embedded 8 delivers the power, familiarity and reliability of the Windows operating system to create advanced commercial devices. The Windows 8 innovations coupled with additional embedded functionality for edge devices will help them quickly and efficiently deliver differentiated solutions with security enhancements, a refined application model and touch-first industry experiences. Windows Embedded 8 Standard and Windows Embedded 8 Pro are available immediately for OEMs to build and ship solutions. Microsoft has launched <http://www.getwindowseembedded8.com> to provide download access to the platforms.

Windows Embedded 8 Industry, which targets retail point-of-service (POS) solutions and other scenarios across manufacturing and healthcare that require fixed experiences with enhanced lockdown, branding and the other benefits of Windows Embedded 8, will be available the week of April 1.

In addition, <http://www.getwindowseembedded8.com> also contains a video series of panel discussions and other resources for enterprises and OEMs to help them take advantage of intelligent systems with Windows Embedded 8. The videos focus on three key industries with significant potential for intelligent systems: healthcare, retail and manufacturing.

all with unique needs and requirements for devices, from kiosks to human machine interface panels (HMI), digital signs and POS terminals. Panelists featured in the videos include Windows Embedded general managers Kevin Dallas and Barb Edson; Neil Jordan, managing director of the Worldwide Health Group, Microsoft; Rohit Bhargava, director of Global Technology Strategy for the Worldwide Manufacturing & Resources Sector, Microsoft; Brendan O Meara, managing director of the Worldwide Retail Group, Microsoft; and industry research analysts Cornelia Wels-Maug (Ovum), Craig Resnick (ARC), and Jerry Sheldon (IHL Group). The panels are moderated by GigaOm Research's Adam Lesser.

More information on Windows Embedded 8 is available at <http://www.getwindowseembedded8.com> and the Windows Embedded Newsroom.

The Tech World's Chronic Sexism Problem: How A Twitter-shaming Spiraled Out of Control

"One tweet. Thousands of comments," says Kashmir Hill at Forbes. "Four days later, two people have been fired. Welcome to the digital age."

Adria Richards, a well-known tech evangelist for the email app SendGrid, attended the PyCon developers conference last weekend. Behind her, two male attendees from PlayHaven, a gaming company, were making what she saw as sexually charged bro jokes—relatively innocuous but juvenile stuff about "dongles" and "forking." So Richards turned around, snapped a picture, and sent out this tweet:

Not cool. Jokes about forking repo's in a sexual way and "big" dongles. Right behind me [#pycon twitter.com/adriarichards/](https://twitter.com/adriarichards/)

Adria Richards (@adriarichards) March 17, 2013

The men later conceded that they had acted inappropriately. They apologized. However, that didn't stop PlayHaven from firing one of the developers. He apologized again, this time on Hacker News, a popular aggregator and forum for the tech crowd:

Hi, I'm the guy who made a comment about big dongles. First of all I'd like to say I'm sorry. I really did not mean to offend anyone and I really do regret the comment and how it made Adria feel. She had every right to report me to staff, and I defend her position. However, there is another side to this story. While I did make a big dongle joke about a fictional piece hardware that identified as male, no sexual jokes were made about forking. My friends and I had decided forking someone's repo is a new form of flattery (the highest form being implementation) and we were excited about one of the presenters projects; a friend said "I would fork that guys repo" The sexual context was applied by Adria, and not us.

My second comment is this, Adria has an audience and is a successful person of the media. Just check out her web page linked in her twitter account, her hard work and social activism speaks for itself. With that great power and reach comes responsibility. As a result of the picture she took I was let go from my job today. Which sucks because I have 3 kids and I really liked that job.

She gave me no warning, she smiled while she snapped the pic and sealed my fate. Let this serve as a message to everyone, our actions and words,

big or small, can have a serious impact. []

Again, I apologize.

And that's where things started to get nasty. The whole thing quickly turned into another example of the male-dominated tech industry showing the world its sexist underbelly.

Richards who said she never intended for the man to be fired began receiving vile threats over Twitter, on her blog, and on Facebook. One representatively disgusting tweet seemed to revel in her hypothetical rape and death.

Someone started a petition to get Richards fired. SendGrid suffered a DDoS attack. Then SendGrid fired her.

"It's no secret that Silicon Valley is lousy with programmers and short on women," says Janet Paskin at Bloomberg Businessweek, "and that imbalance combined with a culture that eschews meetings, titles, and pants probably leads to a lot of questionable jokes and uncomfortable situations."

That said, "the last 24 hours have been some of the ugliest on the internet," says tech marketer Amanda Blum at her blog. "The tech community, especially the Open Source community, is built on respect for others. There's a gentleman's code for privacy (taking a picture w/o permission is not ok; spamming someone a virtual crime) and procedure dictates even security leaks to be reported privately. Trolls aside, if you don't believe there is misogyny in the tech world, this will absolve you of that belief. There was little reasonable chatter, instead she was attacked not as a person or developer but as a female a bitch."

No one wins here: SendGrid, PlayHaven, Richards, the fired developer they all lost.

"The ugliness I've seen in the last week shocks me, I didn't know it could sink to such depths. Adria reinforced the idea of us as threats to men, as unreasonable, as hard to work with as bitches," says Blum. "By that default, men lost too."

Well, "regardless of what you think of the joke itself, it is sexist to contribute (willfully or cluelessly! Ignorance is not an excuse!) to a hostile work environment for women. Full stop," says Lindsey West at Jezebel. "If you didn't realize you were doing it, that means you haven't bothered to think critically about women's comfort and needs. It's f--king 2013. It is not women's responsibility alone to correct gender imbalances. We need men to help."

One tweet. Thousands of comments," says Kashmir Hill at Forbes. "Four days later, two people have been fired. Welcome to the digital age." So what's the lesson?

While Richards was right to call out fellow conference attendees for making sexual jokes that made her uncomfortable, it would have been better to do so in person at the very least by shooting them a snide look! with the possibility of clearing up confusion around terminology. Alternately, she could have snapped their photo and sent it to the conference organizers. But we as a society have become very quick instead to call out wrong-doing publicly, through social media, rather than in person, because it's easier to point the finger digitally than having to deal with the discomfort and

awkwardness involved in doing it to people's faces. [Forbes]

How the Tech World Bends Free Speech into an Excuse for Sexism

The cloud-based email startup SendGrid confirmed in a blog post Friday that it fired developer relations "evangelist" Adria Richards because of a tweet she sent about what she thought was sexist behavior at the PyCon developers conference, setting an unfortunate precedent for a tech industry with diversity problems but no shortage of "dongle" jokes. "Her decision to tweet the comments and photographs of the people who made the comments crossed the line," writes CEO Jim Franklin, referring to a tweet by Richards which said men making sex jokes during a conference was "not cool." The tweet resulted in the termination of one of the men from his gaming company, PlayHaven, and an outcry on his behalf from hackers.

Many people, however, would consider this move a protection of free speech, arguing that she deserved to get fired because she reported a private conversation on Twitter, a public forum. "Freedom of speech is only for people who aren't her apparently," a person with the Twitter handle Metal Jared tweeted at me. By exercising her free speech she curbed his free speech, goes this line of thinking, and since he got fired she should too. Franklin seems to agree with that, noting that PyCon changed its policy, putting in a note about the problem with public shaming:

But, free speech doesn't exactly work like that and PyCon has since removed that note, admitting it had "poor wording." (It's now working on something better with help from the community.) The man who got fired said something in a professional setting and Richards put a face and name to his statements. For some reason, a certain type of Internet folk think that the right to free speech includes the privilege of other people not saying mean things about you. The way this works in practice is that people on Reddit and 4Chan and Twitter will say terrible, harassing, and hateful things about Richards (and anyone who stands up for her) because they think she shouldn't have said something.

It's also worth noting that a lot of the hate toward Richards seems to stem back to a personal dislike for her. A widely linked post about the situation begins, "Let me get this out of the way: I don't like Adria Richards," writes Amanda Bloom, founder of Bettermint. It's her way to bond with the reader before getting into the very troubling reactions to Richards's tweet before writing, "There was little reasonable chatter, instead she was attacked not as a person or developer but as a female a bitch."

Another line of thinking suggests that the better way for Richards to deal with the dongle joke would have been a discussion behind closed doors. It's unclear what would have resulted if she had went that quieter route, since it's impossible to explain something that didn't happen. But, really, is it not OK to tweet or write about something that happens at a work conference? Isn't that what these events basically are for?

When Samsung used a group of drunk bridesmaids to point out all the "lady things" its phone can do should I not have written about that in a blog post and tweeted it out on Twitter? The Internet, or at least the part we spend the most time on, is basically for telling people what we think about things. That purpose is why all the Redditors keep fighting for their right to anonymity when they tell the each other what they think

about unsuspecting women's butts. Never-mind the irony of a culture that created and has thoroughly embraced Twitter now suggesting that certain things can't be tweeted by certain people. There are no special rules for the tech community on the platforms they evangelize, despite what some people would hope.

The counterargument to that is that Richards did not see or experience real sexism because "dongle" and "forking" jokes aren't sexist and therefore she misused her public platform of 20,000 Twitter followers. "Even I've made 'fork' jokes," wrote one commenter who disagreed with my post yesterday. But just because something happens all the time does not make it OK. The institutionalized sexism in the developer world is well documented, and as Richards admits in her post, the tweet was a reaction to conferences worth of similar humor. And certainly the reaction since her tweet has revealed the ugliest side of sexism in the tech world. But, most importantly, if the man had not done or said something sexist he would still have his job at PlayHaven his company's statement suggests that this was not an isolated incident. Richards didn't ask PyCon or PlayHaven to fire him. She pointed to the PyCon code of conduct and tweeted the man's face along with his badge name. Theoretically, if her tweets had no merit then it wouldn't have resulted in the man's firing and maybe people wouldn't have gotten to immediately defensive. If she overreacted, as many claim, then she would have just written a stupid tweet and some people would have agreed or disagreed.

SendGrid has one possibly reasonable reason for firing Richards: She could no longer effectively do her job. She works in developer relations and clearly because of her actions many developers don't want to work with her anymore. That's the unfortunate reality of making an unpopular statement in the face of discrimination: This woman has become a liability to a company.

A Strange Computer Promises Great Speed

Our digital age is all about bits, those precise ones and zeros that are the stuff of modern computer code.

But a powerful new type of computer that is about to be commercially deployed by a major American military contractor is taking computing into the strange, subatomic realm of quantum mechanics. In that infinitesimal neighborhood, common sense logic no longer seems to apply. A one can be a one, or it can be a one and a zero and everything in between all at the same time.

It sounds preposterous, particularly to those familiar with the yes/no world of conventional computing. But academic researchers and scientists at companies like Microsoft, I.B.M. and Hewlett-Packard have been working to develop quantum computers.

Now, Lockheed Martin which bought an early version of such a computer from the Canadian company D-Wave Systems two years ago is confident enough in the technology to upgrade it to commercial scale, becoming the first company to use quantum computing as part of its business.

Skeptics say that D-Wave has yet to prove to outside scientists that it has solved the myriad challenges involved in quantum computation.

But if it performs as Lockheed and D-Wave expect, the design could be used to supercharge even the most powerful systems, solving some science and business problems millions of times faster than can be done today.

Ray Johnson, Lockheed's chief technical officer, said his company would use the quantum computer to create and test complex radar, space and aircraft systems. It could be possible, for example, to tell instantly how the millions of lines of software running a network of satellites would react to a solar burst or a pulse from a nuclear explosion something that can now take weeks, if ever, to determine.

This is a revolution not unlike the early days of computing, he said.

It is a transformation in the way computers are thought about. Many others could find applications for D-Wave's computers. Cancer researchers see a potential to move rapidly through vast amounts of genetic data. The technology could also be used to determine the behavior of proteins in the human genome, a bigger and tougher problem than sequencing the genome. Researchers at Google have worked with D-Wave on using quantum computers to recognize cars and landmarks, a critical step in managing self-driving vehicles.

Quantum computing is so much faster than traditional computing because of the unusual properties of particles at the smallest level. Instead of the precision of ones and zeros that have been used to represent data since the earliest days of computers, quantum computing relies on the fact that subatomic particles inhabit a range of states. Different relationships among the particles may coexist, as well. Those probable states can be narrowed to determine an optimal outcome among a near-infinity of possibilities, which allows certain types of problems to be solved rapidly.

D-Wave, a 12-year-old company based in Vancouver, has received investments from Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com, which operates one of the world's largest computer systems, as well as from the investment bank Goldman Sachs and from In-Q-Tel, an investment firm with close ties to the Central Intelligence Agency and other government agencies.

What we're doing is a parallel development to the kind of computing we've had for the past 70 years, said Vern Brownell, D-Wave's chief executive.

Mr. Brownell, who joined D-Wave in 2009, was until 2000 the chief technical officer at Goldman Sachs. In those days, we had 50,000 servers just doing simulations to figure out trading strategies, he said. I'm sure there is a lot more than that now, but we'll be able to do that with one machine, for far less money.

D-Wave, and the broader vision of quantum-supercharged computing, is not without its critics. Much of the criticism stems from D-Wave's own claims in 2007, later withdrawn, that it would produce a commercial quantum computer within a year.

There's no reason quantum computing shouldn't be possible, but people talked about heavier-than-air flight for a long time before the Wright brothers solved the problem, said Scott Aaronson, a professor of computer science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. D-Wave, he said, has said things in the past that were just ridiculous, things that give you very little confidence.

But others say people working in quantum computing are generally optimistic about breakthroughs to come. Quantum researchers are taking a

step out of the theoretical domain and into the applied, said Peter Lee, the head of Microsoft's research arm, which has a team in Santa Barbara, Calif., pursuing its own quantum work. There is a sense among top researchers that we're all in a race.

If Microsoft's work pans out, he said, the millions of possible combinations of the proteins in a human gene could be worked out fairly easily.

Quantum computing has been a goal of researchers for more than three decades, but it has proved remarkably difficult to achieve. The idea has been to exploit a property of matter in a quantum state known as superposition, which makes it possible for the basic elements of a quantum computer, known as qubits, to hold a vast array of values simultaneously.

There are a variety of ways scientists create the conditions needed to achieve superposition as well as a second quantum state known as entanglement, which are both necessary for quantum computing. Researchers have suspended ions in magnetic fields, trapped photons or manipulated phosphorus atoms in silicon.

The D-Wave computer that Lockheed has bought uses a different mathematical approach than competing efforts. In the D-Wave system, a quantum computing processor, made from a lattice of tiny superconducting wires, is chilled close to absolute zero. It is then programmed by loading a set of mathematical equations into the lattice.

The processor then moves through a near-infinity of possibilities to determine the lowest energy required to form those relationships. That state, seen as the optimal outcome, is the answer.

The approach, which is known as adiabatic quantum computing, has been shown to have promise in applications like calculating protein folding, and D-Wave's designers said it could potentially be used to evaluate complicated financial strategies or vast logistics problems.

However, the company's scientists have not yet published scientific data showing that the system computes faster than today's conventional binary computers. While similar subatomic properties are used by plants to turn sunlight into photosynthetic energy in a few million-billionths of a second, critics of D-Wave's method say it is not quantum computing at all, but a form of standard thermal behavior.

FCC Chief Genachowski To Step Down, Touts Expanded Broadband

Julius Genachowski said on Friday he will step down as chairman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission in the coming weeks after four years on the job, and touted his record of working to expand broadband Internet service to Americans.

Genachowski, whose term was due to end in June, told FCC staffers he would be leaving his post "in the coming weeks" but did not give a date. He told Reuters after his announcement that he has no career plans lined up for after his FCC tenure ends.

"I'm still focused on the work of the agency," Genachowski said, adding

that he expects the FCC, which maintains a Democratic majority, to keep its policy direction after he leaves.

Asked to describe his tenure at the FCC in three words, Genachowski answered "unleashing broadband's benefits."

His exit from the agency that oversees telecommunications and broadcast policies was widely expected after President Barack Obama's re-election. Obama will nominate a successor to Genachowski, who has headed the FCC since 2009.

In a statement, Obama praised Genachowski, the president's classmate at Harvard Law School, for giving the FCC a "clear focus" on encouraging innovation and competitiveness, attracting "jobs of tomorrow" and improving high-speed Internet access and mobile devices sector growth.

"I am grateful for his service and friendship, and I wish Julius the best of luck," Obama said.

The FCC is also losing its senior Republican commissioner. Robert McDowell said on Wednesday he will depart his post in a few weeks, leaving the five-member panel with two Democrats, one Republican and two vacancies.

Among the possible candidates to head the FCC is Tom Wheeler, a venture capitalist and an Obama ally and fundraiser. Wheeler headed the National Cable Television Association and the wireless industry group CTIA.

Two other possible contenders are: Lawrence Strickling, head of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which advises the president on telecommunications and information policy; and Karen Kornbluh, the U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, an international economic body.

The next FCC chief faces a list of projects to complete. One major one is Genachowski's plan for a complex incentive auction of spectrum that is meant to free up airwaves for better wireless Internet access.

The auction relies on TV stations to give up some of their airwaves to be auctioned off to wireless companies or opened up for shared use. The broadcasters would get a portion of the proceeds and the rest would pay for a public-safety program and go to the U.S. Treasury.

Also on the list is the delayed loosening of rules on media ownership.

Asked whether he would like to see a vote on those rules before he leaves the FCC, Genachowski said only that the commission will "continue to work on the agenda."

Later this year, a federal court will also hold hearings in a case against Genachowski's net neutrality rules for Internet service providers that could have broad implications for the breadth of the FCC's regulatory power.

In his FCC tenure, Genachowski oversaw an overhaul of the multibillion-dollar Universal Service Fund from a project to spread telephone service in rural America to one focused on broadband access. He also spearheaded the creation of a strategy known as the National Broadband Plan and later pushed Internet providers to step up the speediness of their services.

The FCC's priorities under Genachowski reduced the influence of U.S. broadcasters, the relationship with whom has been "an uneasy dance," according to Medley Global Advisors telecommunications policy analyst Jeffrey Silva.

Also left disappointed were liberal-leaning organizations including consumer interest groups. Harold Feld of advocacy group Public Knowledge said Genachowski is leaving more tasks for his successor to finish than most of his predecessors.

"It's true to some degree of every chairman, but this chairman in particular came in with a lot of expectations," Feld said. "And then, as people say, he wrote a lot of checks that he's now leaving for the next chair to figure out how to cash."

Genachowski, who charted a centrist course in his chairmanship, defended his tenure, which also included the FCC's rejection of a landmark 2011 merger bid between U.S. No. 2 wireless carrier AT&T Inc and fourth-largest provider T-Mobile USA, a unit of Deutsche Telekom. The bid was dropped after the Justice Department sued to block the deal.

In pushing against the merger, Genachowski stood up against the prospect of a duopoly in the wireless market by AT&T and the largest carrier, Verizon, analysts say, as it retained T-Mobile as a competitor and protected the third-biggest player Sprint from being overwhelmed.

"This sector has always been and will always be characterized by a robust debate," Genachowski said.

"Some people say the commission has gone too far, some people say the commission hasn't gone far enough. What we've been focused on are the right actions to drive the economy and to improve the lives of the American people."

Genachowski came to the FCC after advising Obama on telecommunications policy and working at several tech investment firms. He had previously served as chief counsel for former FCC Chairman Reed Hundt.

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